

[Trade deal differences](#) (Greensboro News & Record – October 14, 2011)

By Doug Clark

Republican Sen. Richard Burr voted for all three trade deals approved last night. Democratic Sen. Kay Hagan voted against. All passed by wide margins: 66-33 ([Colombia](#)), 77-22 ([Panama](#)) and 83-15 ([South Korea](#)).

North Carolina's House delegation was mixed on the agreements with Colombia and Panama but almost unanimously opposed to the South Korea pact — which probably will lead to further erosion in the U.S. textile industry. Only Democratic Rep. David Price voted in favor of free trade with South Korea. Here's how our delegation broke down.

South Korea, [approved 278-151](#) . For: Price (D). Against: Howard Coble (R), **Mel Watt** (D), Brad Miller (D), Virginia Foxx (R), Mike McIntyre (D), Rene Ellmers (R), G.K. Butterfield (D), Larry Kissell (D), Walter Jones (R), Sue Myrick (R), Patrick McHenry (R), Heath Shuler (D).

Panama, [approved 300-129](#) . For: Coble, Ellmers, Price, **Watt**, Myrick, McHenry, Foxx. Against: Miller, Jones, Butterfield, Kissell, Shuler, McIntyre.

Colombia, [approved 262-167](#) . For: Price, Coble, Ellmers, Foxx, McHenry, Myrick. Against: Butterfield, Jones, Miller, Kissell, **Watt**, Shuler, McIntyre.

Hagan issued a statement. In part:

"I have listened closely to North Carolinians on all sides of the trade agreement debate. While I understand that there are arguments to be made both for and against these agreements, North Carolina workers and their jobs are my top concern. Our state has suffered more than most from unfair trading practices for years, and I am tired of shipping good North Carolina jobs — in industries like textiles and furniture — overseas to countries that don't play by the same rules. Unfair trade agreements have contributed to the loss of more than 286,000 North Carolina manufacturing jobs in the last decade — the fourth-largest decline in the nation. It is time we start protecting jobs here at home. "As with my vote in favor of the bipartisan Senate bill to combat Chinese currency manipulation, I am drawing a line in the sand for North Carolinians. I know that our workers and businesses can compete and succeed with any country in the world — all they need is a level playing field." The prevailing view in Washington, however, is that these agreements are designed to "level the playing field." While free and fair trade means there will be winners and losers in our economy, the net effect hopefully will be positive. But for North Carolina? Our representatives don't seem to think so in regard to free trade with South Korea. With Colombia and Panama, the outlook is split. Let's hope for the best.